

STATE OF MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LANSING



MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Thomas D. Watkins, Jr.

DATE: July 9, 2003

SUBJECT: Approval of WorkKeys Assessments and

Passing Scores for Title I Paraprofessionals

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 established new qualifications for Title I paraprofessionals to ensure that they would have the necessary knowledge and skills to assist in instructing students in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics. All Title I paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, are required to meet one of the following qualifications:

- Two years of study at an institution of higher education, or
- An associate's (or higher) degree, or
- Meet rigorous standards through a formal assessment of knowledge of and ability to assist in instructing reading, writing and mathematics.

Title I paraprofessionals employed prior to January 8, 2002, must meet one of these requirements by January 8, 2006.

In April 2002 the Basic Skills Test of the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification was identified as an assessment that could be used to meet the new requirements. At the same time, the Michigan Department of Education expressed its intent to identify other assessments that would be appropriate for this purpose. Discussions with various educational groups led to the selection of the ACT WorkKeys assessments as a second assessment option. WorkKeys assessments are used to determine skill levels for a broad array of occupations; are widely available through more than forty service centers in the state; and are supported by training materials to help individuals improve their skills.

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The WorkKeys system uses a profiling process to determine the appropriate assessments and skill levels for a particular occupation. This process was completed for Title I paraprofessionals in Michigan through a contract with Ingham Intermediate School District, which provided ACT Authorized Job Analysts to complete separate job profiles involving 107 paraprofessionals in six regions of the state. The information from these profiles was compiled in the attached report, with recommended assessments and skill levels based on the profiling process. With one exception, there was complete agreement on the appropriate skill levels, as shown on Page 10 of the report.

Based on the results of the profiling process, staff recommends approval of the following WorkKeys assessments and passing scores as an option for meeting the Title I paraprofessional requirements in the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*:

WorkKeys Assessment	Passing Scores		
Reading for Information	4		
Applied Mathematics	4		
Writing	3		

Approval of WorkKeys will establish two assessment options for meeting the Title I paraprofessional requirements. It is strongly recommended that districts give their Title I paraprofessional staff who do not meet the higher education requirements the choice of either assessment option, since one assessment will be more appropriate than the other depending on the individual paraprofessional's situation. The Department intends to continue to review other assessment options to make additional choices available.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education:

- 1) Approve the WorkKeys assessments and passing scores for Title I paraprofessionals as described in the Superintendent's memorandum dated July 9, 2003; and
- 2) Strongly encourage school districts to allow each of their Title I paraprofessionals to select the option that is most appropriate for that person's individual situation.

Attachment

Title I Paraprofessional WorkKeys® Job Profile Project Summary Report

Michigan Department of Education
Office of Field Services
P.O Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909

Overview

The president signed the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 on January 8, 2002. Requirements for hiring new Title I Paraprofessional took immediate effect. Section 1119 of Title I, Part A requires that Title I Paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002 meet the following qualifications

- 2 years of study at an institution of higher education, or
- Associate's (or higher) degree, or
 Meet rigorous standards through formal state or local academic assessment of knowledge of and ability to assist in instructing reading, writing and mathematics

Paraprofessionals employed prior to January 8, 2002 have four years (until January 2006) to meet these requirements.

Guidance issued by the U. S. Department of Education has clarified that the requirements apply to all Paraprofessionals who provide assistance with instruction and whose positions are funded totally or in part by Title I funds, and Paraprofessionals who assist with instruction in Title I- Schoolwide buildings.

In an April 2002 letter, Superintendent Thomas D. Watkins, Jr. established the Basic Skills test of the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification as an approved assessment that would demonstrate that a candidate had the necessary knowledge in reading, mathematics and writing.

The Michigan Department of Education then began the process of identifying another assessment that could be used to demonstrate that a Paraprofessional or candidate for a Paraprofessional position had the required level of knowledge in the three subject areas. After considerable work with educational groups, Paraprofessionals and the Title I Committee of Practitioners, the ACTTM WorkKeys® assessment was selected. The ACT WorkKeys assessments can address skill levels in many areas and for many job classifications. There are more than forty ACT approved WorkKeys service centers in Michigan that can administer and score the assessments.

Project Objective

The purpose of this profiling project was to define the WorkKeys skill level required for Title I Paraprofessionals in the state of Michigan. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires rigorous standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The law states that any assessment used to certify teacher assistants (paraprofessionals) must be valid, reliable, and documented. WorkKeys fits these criteria.

The WorkKeys Job Profile and Assessment system is a national workplace competency system for business and industry. The system measures workplace skills, relates those skills to specific jobs, and offers training to individuals to improve their skills and performance. A real advantage to the WorkKeys system is that it includes both skills testing and skills training.

In developing the WorkKeys system, including WorkKeys assessments and the job profiling procedure, ACT has been and will continue to be guided by both the *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures* (1978) which have been adopted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and various other federal agencies, and the *Standards: For Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 1999). ACT indicates that the proper use of WorkKeys

assessments in conjunction with completion of job profiling, meets the requirements set forth in the Guidelines.

Job Profiling

ACT's WorkKeys Job Profiling system is a job analysis system that assists organizations identify the skills and skill levels employees must have to perform particular jobs effectively. It also gives individuals a clear picture of the skill levels they need in order to qualify for and be successful in jobs they desire. When used with assessments, instruction, and reporting, job profiling allows workers to make decisions about appropriate jobs and to identify areas they need to strengthen in pursuing their career goals.

Job analysts who have been trained and authorized WorkKeys by industrial/organizational psychologists conduct WorkKeys job profiling. The profiling procedure is designed to systematically develop accurate profiles through a task analysis, a skill analysis, and a skill ranking process. Task analysis is used to select the tasks most critical to a job. Skill analysis that is used to identify the skills and skill levels required at the entry level and for effective performance on that job. Skill ranking determines which WorkKeys skills are the most critical to the job.

When profiling a job, the ACT authorized job analyst first obtains background information about the job and company. The analyst then begins the process of task analysis by consulting the Dictionary of Occupational Titles to develop a list of tasks that are relevant to the job. The analyst meets with subject matter experts (SMEs), who are incumbent workers or supervisors in the profiled job. The analyst and SMEs work together to ensure the task list accurately reflects the job. The SMEs add, delete, consolidate, and change the description of tasks to make sure they depict the job as it is performed.

After carefully examining this list of tasks, the SMEs rate each task according to two dimensions: Importance and Relative Time Spent. Importance refers to the significance

of the task to overall job performance. Relative Time Spent is the amount of time spent performing this task compared to that spent on other tasks. The average Importance Rating is multiplied by the average Relative Time Spent rating to produce the Criticality rating for each task. These ratings represent aggregate information, rather than information reached by consensus. The SMEs review the resulting task list, which lists the tasks in order of Criticality. The resulting Final Task List establishes which tasks are the most critical to perform the job

Once the SMEs understand the definition of a WorkKeys skill and have determined its relevance to the job, they independently identify the tasks on the Final Task List that require the skill. Using the resulting list of tasks that require the skill, the SMEs then identify work behaviors that specifically use that skill. For example, they might note that Reading for Information is necessary for performing the task of reading technical manuals in order to operate equipment. The analyst then presents detailed descriptions of the WorkKeys skill levels to the SMEs. These descriptions include examples of problems or situations employees deal with at each level. The SMEs decide which skill levels are necessary at the entry level and for effective performance.

The last step the SMEs do during the job profiling session is to rank the skills included in the profile in relations to other skills included in the profile. Each SME makes this decision independently and then the analyst compiles the results of the rankings. The result is a rank ordering of the WorkKeys skills that are most critical to performing the job.

Michigan Department of Education

Job Profiling Project

Title I Paraprofessionals

This section provides an overview of the job profiling process for the position of Title I Paraprofessionals in Michigan, which followed the process described above. The only variation was to use a common Final Task List for Phase II (Skill Analysis). For more detailed information, see the Task List section of this report.

For the purpose of this report the term "Paraprofessional" shall be used as the job title. It should be noted that various job titles such as Teacher Assistants, Teacher aide, Paraeducator etc. are intended to be included in this job title.

Six separate job profiles were conducted the following Michigan Counties: Cheboygan, Ingham, Kent, Marquette, Oakland, and Wayne. The number and geographical locations of the profiles were determined by the Michigan Department of Education. Each of the six profiles was conducted using consistent methods and procedures. Executive Summary Reports for each of the six profiles are included in this report.

Project Staff

This project was coordinated and conducted by the following ACT Authorized Job Analysts:

Ms. Cynthia Leyrer, Project Coordinator & Job Analyst Ingham Intermediate School District

Ms. Cindy Armstrong, Job Analyst Kent Intermediate School District

Ms. Ann Thomason, Job Analyst Macomb Community College The Profiling Project Team members have worked with educators, business leaders and community service organizations assist them in identifying job duties, tasks, skills, and training for workforce development. They have profiled jobs and occupations for Education, Insurance, Manufacturing, and Health Care. The profiling team members had performed approximately 35 job profiles prior to this project.

Pre-Profile Activities

Prior to conducting the profiles, an Initial Task List was developed using a combination of resources. The job analysts consulted the Dictionary of Occupational Title, O*NET, MOIS (Michigan Occupational Information System), and other relevant databases. The Michigan Department of Education requested job descriptions from school districts; ninety-two job descriptions from 32 Michigan school districts in 20 counties were provided to the job analysts. The occupational information as well as the job descriptions was used by the job analysts to develop a list of tasks relevant to the job of Paraprofessionals. After the development of this Initial Task List, tours of Title I school buildings and classrooms were conducted in three geographical locations in the state. The analysts asked SMEs (subject matter experts who are incumbent workers or supervisors) to examine the task list, and make comments regarding the completeness and accuracy of the list. The job analysts observed the work behaviors of Title I Paraprofessionals in classrooms, and made notations and inquiries regarding the task and duties that require reading, writing and mathematics skills necessary to perform the job. This data was also used to develop the initial task list. Samples of reading, math and writing were obtained from the tour/shadow activities.

Focus Groups

Participants for Phase I (Task Analysis) and Phase II (Skill Analysis) were selected by educational agencies and associations. The Michigan Department of Education requested nominations for participation in the process through these agencies and associations. The project coordinator indicated to the MDE that a representative sample group be selected for the project with consideration given to race, age, gender, and years of experience.

The size and socio-economic status, for which they work, should be considered as well. Appropriate demographic information was collected at each focus group as required by ACT, and is not included in this report.

The job profile process was divided into two separate sessions: Phase I (Task Analysis) and Phase II (Skill Analysis). This allowed a greater number of Paraprofessional to have input into the process, and provide an opportunity to expand the sampling group of participants.

A total of 107 "Subject Matter Experts" participated in the job analysis process. These individuals represented 56 Michigan school districts and 81 buildings. Sixty-three, or 59% of the SMEs were funded through Title I funds. Sixty SMEs participated in Phase I (Task Analysis) and 61 participated in Phase II (Skill Analysis). Twenty-one people participated in both sessions.

Phase I (Task Analysis)

Job analysts met with six separate groups to develop a task list. Task analysis was conducted in April and May of 2003. The analysts met with subject matter experts (SMEs) who are incumbent workers in Title I Paraprofessional positions. Two job analysts facilitated each focus group of SMEs in this process.

The ACT job analysts guided the SME's focus group in editing the Initial Task List. The SMEs added, deleted, consolidated, and changed the descriptions of tasks to ascertain the accuracy and completeness of the task list. After carefully examining and editing the task list, the SMEs rated each task according to two dimensions: Importance and Relative Time Spent. Importance refers to the significance of the task to overall job performance. Relative Time Spent is the amount of time spent performing each task compared to that spent on other tasks. The average of the Importance Rating and Relative Time Spent Ratings were then multiplied to produce the Criticality Rating for each task ratings represent aggregate information, rather than information reached by the consensus of the SMEs.

The Criticality ratings could range from 0 to 25. The task statements were then reordered based on the Criticality ratings. This resulted in a Final Task List that established which tasks are critical to performing the tasks of the job. This activity concluded Phase I.

Task Lists

In order to effectively proceed to Phase II, a single task list was needed. According to ACT consultation services, it was that recommended a single task list be used to facilitate consistent identification of skill levels in Phase II. The process for developing a single task list was accomplished using the Criticality Ratings from Phase I. Similar task statements including the criticality score and rank on the task list was compiled into a single document. This document was examined and reviewed by a team of Title I "experts" who include Title I teachers and supervisors, representative from MDE, and two job analysts. The tasks were combined, minor changes were made, which did not change the content or meaning of the text, and the resulting list of tasks was used as the Final Task List for each session in Phase II. The documents used to develop the Final Task List are included in the Task List section of this report.

Phase II (Skill Analysis)

The job analysts met again with six groups of SMEs in the state to identify the appropriate skill levels for Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics and Writing. These meetings were conducted in May and June of 2003. Two job analysts facilitated each focus group of SMEs in this process.

Using the Final Task List, SMEs in each group independently identified the tasks on the list that require each skill. The job analysts explained the WorkKeys skill definition for each skill. After the SMEs understood the skill definition, they independently identified tasks on the Final Task List that required the skill. The job analysts used this information to develop a Master List for each skill. Using the Master List of tasks that require the skill, the SMEs identified work behaviors that specifically use that skill. For example,

they might note that the Reading for Information skill is necessary for performing the task of reading the staff handbook to understand district or building policies. The analysts indicated on chart paper the work behaviors specific to each skill. The analysts then presented detailed descriptions of the WorkKeys skill levels to the SMEs. These descriptions included examples of problems or situations employees deal with at each level. The SMEs identified work behaviors on the chart paper where a specific skill level may be necessary. The SMEs indicated whether their job requires a higher skill level, about the same skill level, or a lower skill level. When all the relevant skill levels had been presented, the SMEs indicated which skill level is necessary for entry and effective performance of the job. This process was repeated for each of the four skills, Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, Business Writing, and Writing. Executive Summary reports, as well as chart information for each profile is included in this report.

Summary Data Chart

Skill Levels

Title I Paraprofessional

Profile Location	Reading for Information (Range 3–7)		Applied Mathematics (Range 3-7)		Writing (Range 1-5)	
	Entry	Effective Performance	Entry	Effective Performance	Entry	Effective Performance
Cheboygan	4	4	4	4	3	3
Ingham	4	4	4	4	3	3
Kent	4	4	4	4	3	3
Marquette	4	4	4	4	3	3
Oakland	4	4	4	4	3	3
Wayne	3	4	3	4	2	3

Skill Ranking

During the final step of Phase II, the SMEs ranked each skill included in the profile in terms of their criticality to performing the job. Each SME made this judgment independently, and the job analysts compiled the results of the ranking. Summary data is indicated below.

Summary Data Chart
Skill Ranking
Title I Paraprofessional

Profile Location	Reading for Information	Applied Mathematics	Writing	
Cheboygan	1	2	3	
Ingham	1	3	2	
Kent	1	3	2	
Marquette	1	2	3	
Oakland	1	2	3	
Wayne	1	2	3	

A ranking of 1 indicates that this skill is most critical to the job. The remaining skills are ranked in descending order.

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Where Can I Take the WorkKeys Assessment Tests?

You can take the WorkKeys tests at any of these Michigan WorkKeys Service Centers. Call for testing times and fee information.

Joel Rodrigues Lenawee ISD Vo-Tech Center 2345 N. Adrian Hwy Adrian, MI 49221 (517) 265-1656

Chuck Wiesen Cruck Wiesen Alpena Community College 666 Johnson St. Alpena, MI 49707 (989) 356-9021 ext. 235

Karen Cross Washtenaw Community College Ann Arbor, MI (734) 766-5018

Nancy Obey Kellogg Community College 450 North Avenue Battle Creek, MI 49017 (616) 965-4135

Robert Harrison M-TEC at Lake Michigan College 400 Klock Rd. Benton Harbor, MI 49022 (616) 926-4086

Sheryl Hayden Glen Oaks Community College 62249 Shimmel Rd. Centreville, MI 49032 (616) 467-9945 ext. 296

Gail Conte Henry Ford Community College 5101 Evergreen Rd. Dearborn, MI 48128 (313) 845-9652

Mary Smith Wayne County Community College Detroit, MI (313) 496-2542 Mail: Cynthia Craft Workforce and Economic Dev. 801 West Fort St. Detroit, MI 48226

Paul Mulka Paul Mulka Michigan Career & Technical Inst. 1161 f W. Pine Lake Rd Plainwell, MI 49080 (616) 664-9204

Brady Nelson Bay De Noc Community College 2001 North Lincoln Rd. Escanaba, MI 49829 (906) 786-5802

Chuck Thiel Mott Community College Flint, MI (810) 232-8915

Ed Haynor Newaygo County Career Tech Center Fremont, MI (231) 924-8826

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Ross Kissel West Shore Community West Shore Community College 3000 N. Stiles Rd Scottville, MI 49454 (231) 845-6211 ext. 3503

Delta Community College Assessment/Testing, D-101 1961 Delta Rd. University Center, MI 48710 (989) 686-9532

Detroit's Work Place 455 W. Fort Street, 5th Floor Detroit, MI 48226 (313) 962-9675

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